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Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----------111051 161109Z /23
P 160815Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY SANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4732
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

S E C R E T SANA 2312

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, XF
SUBJECT: BRIEFING ON DAYAN AND BEGIN VISITS

REF: STATE 114888

BEGIN SUMMARY: BRIEF YAR FOREIGN MINISTER ASNAJ ON
MAY 15 ON DAYAN VISIT AND NOTED SOME POINTS FROM
ATHERTON'S SPEECH IN DETROIT ON MAY 10. ASNAJ, FOCUSING
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ON POSSIBILITY ARAB SUMMIT, CONFINED HIMSELF TO QUESTION
ABOUT ROLE GENEVA CONFERENCE IN NEXT STEPS IN SETTLEMENT
PROCESS. END SUMMARY.

1. YAR FOREIGN MINISTER HAS BEEN OUT OF SANA FOR
MOST OF LAST THREE WEEUK AND IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO USE
STATE 114888 UNTIL MAY 15. AS THESE INSTRUCTIONS ON

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BRIEFING SENIOR HOST GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ON LASTEST ROUND OF TALKS WITH BEGIN AND DAYAN ARE NOW A BIT DATED, I USED THEM TO ILLUSTRATE CONTINUED EFFORT ON PART OF US TO PRESS SETTLEMENT EFFORT AND PARTICULARLY TO CONTINUE OUR SUPPORT FOR SADAT'S NEGOTIATING STRATEGY. ASNAJ LISTENED CAREFULLY BUT SAID NOTHING AND I WENT ON TO NOTE SOME POINTS FROM ATHERTON'S SPECH IN DETROIT ON MAY 10.

2. I NOTED PROSPECT THAT VOTE IN THE SENATE ON MONDAY AFTERNOON MAY WELL ALLOW ARMS SALES TO EGYPT, SAUDI ARABIA AND ISRAEL TO GO AHEAD AND THEN QUOTED ATHERTON'S STATEMENT THAT "IN WEEKS AHEAD WE SHALL CONTINUE OUR INTENSIVE CONSULTATION WITH BOTH ISRAEL AND EGYPT OVER THE QUESTION OF THE FUTURE OF THE WEST BANK AND GAZA AND THE ROLE OF THE PALESTINIANS IN RESOLVING THIS QUESTION." THEN I CITED STATEMENT THAT ALLUDED TO COMPLEXITY OF ISSUES AND NEED FOR "INTERMIN ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE WEST BANK AND GAZA AGREED BETWEEN ISRAEL, JORDAN, EGYPT AND PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATIVES." I STRESSED AIM OR WORKING OUT "AN ULTIMATE SOLUTION" DURING THE INTERIM PERIOD AND OUR VIEW THAT A WEST BANK LINKED CLOSELY WITH JORDAN WAS PREFERABLE TO AN INDEPENDENT PALSESTINIAN STATE.

3. I KMPECTED A LECTURE BUT INSTEAD ASNAJ SAID THAT THE BELIEVED YEMEN MIGHT SOON BE CALLED TO JOIN THE FIVE

OTHER STATES ON THE ARAB LEAGUE COORDINATING COMMITTEE APPOINTED UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF NUMAYRI TO CONVENE AN ARAB SUMMIT. IF HE WENT TO KHARTOUMUGNOR THIS PURPOSE, SAID ASNAJ, WHAT COULD HE SAY ABOUT US VIEWS ON THE FUTURE ROLE OF THE GENEVA CONFERRNCE AND THE JOINT STATEMENT OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION SOME MONTHS AGO.

4. I SAID I WOULD TRY TO GET HIM AN EXACT ANSWER BUT I THOUGHT IN GENERAL OUR GOVERNMENT VIEWED THE GENEVA CONFERENCE AS BEING MOST USEFUL AT THE CONCLUSION OF AGREEMENTS WHICH HAD BEEN NEGOTIATED ELSEWHERE, EITHER DIRECTLY BETWEEN THE PARTIES OR SUBJECT TO OUR INTER-VENTION. THE AGREEMENT, HOWEVER, WAS HARDLY DEAD AND IT WAS DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE A SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST WHICH COULD SURVIVE IF OPPOSED BY THE SOVIET UNION.

5. ASNAJ THEN RELATED AT SOME LENGTH ACTIVITIES OF SOVIET AMBASSADOR IN SANA TO WARN EVERYONE FROM

PRESIDENT GHASHMI ON DOWN, AGAINST AN ARAB SUMMIT.

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ASNAJ FELT SOVIETS WERE AFRAID THAT REJECTION FRONT WAS BREAKING UP AND ITS MEMBER MIGHT BE RECONCILED IN VARYING DEGREES TO EGYPT UNDER INFLUENCE OF ARAB SUMMIT. HE SAID HE THOUGHT "SOVIETS WERE UP TO SOMETHING," BUT DIDN'T KNOW WHAT AND YEMEN WANTED TO PROCEED WITH ARAB SUMMIT AS WAY OF SHORING UP SADAT INITIATIVE.

COMMENT: PERHAPS ASNAJ THINKS THAT SOME INDICATION OF CONTINUED SOVIET ROLE IN SETTLEMENT PROCESS THROUGHT GENEVA CONFERENCE WILL ALLAY THEIR OPPOSITION TO ARAB SUMMIT WHICH MIGHT PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR SADAT INITIATIVE AT EXPENSE OF SOVIETS CLIENTS WHO OPPOSE SADAT. WHILE I WAS SURPRISED AND PLEASED THAT ASNAJ DID NOT DELIVE USUAL LECTURE ON FAILURE OF US TO SEIZE ITS OPPORTUNITIES
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IN MIDDLE EAST, I AM NEVERTHELESS SKEPTICAL THAT HE CAN OR WOULD BE OF MUCH USE AS MEMBER OF COORDINATING COMMITTEE TO ARRANGE ARAB SUMMIT. YEMENI ROLE IS PROBABLY STRICTLY THAT OF WALK-ON IN SUCH A PLAY. NEVER-THELESS, IT IS USEFUL FOR US LOCALLY TO ENGAGE YARG OFFICIALS IN SUCH QUESTIONS AND ASNAJ, A PERSUASIVE AND AMBITIOUS MINISTER, IS INVOLVED, HOWEVER TANGENTIALLY, IN PRE-SUMMIT DISCUSSIONS. IF DEPARTMENT HAS FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS, SPECIFICALLY IN RESPONS TO ASNAJ'S QUESTION ABOUT GENEVA CONFERENCE, I KNOW HE WOULD BE GLAD TO CARRY ON THIS DISCUSSION.
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